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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixty-first year

Identical letters dated 28 June 2006 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Israel, the occupying Power, has today launched a major air and ground military assault on the Gaza Strip, threatening the lives of the defenceless Palestinian civilian population in the area and causing the further deterioration and destabilization of the grave situation on the ground, which could have far-reaching impacts in terms of the stability of the region and thus on international peace and security.

After deploying thousands of troops in recent days along the southern border of the Gaza Strip, following the capture of an Israeli soldier on 25 June from a military outpost of the occupying forces on the Gaza border, the occupying Power has begun firing missiles at targets in Gaza from its warplanes and has been launching artillery from tanks on the ground that have pushed several kilometres into southern Gaza along with dozens of armoured vehicles and bulldozers. Collectively punishing and terrorizing the Palestinian civilian population, Israel, the occupying Power, has already caused the destruction of Gaza's only power station by air missile strike, cutting off electricity to the majority of the more than 1.3 million Palestinian residents of the Gaza Strip and cutting off water supplies to the civilian population as well, and has also bombed at least three bridges and a gasoline reservoir in the area. These attacks on the civilian infrastructure, in addition to the constant barrage of sonic booms by low-flying warplanes over civilian neighbourhoods and the closure of all border crossings into and out of Gaza, are deepening the humanitarian suffering of the Palestinian people and causing extensive physical and environmental destruction on the ground with far-reaching detrimental consequences for the population.

The escalation of violence by the occupying Power and the incessant incitement by Israeli officials, including declarations of "immunity for no one", threats to assassinate Palestinian officials, and vows by the Israeli Prime Minister to

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take "extreme action", have generated widespread fear and panic among the Palestinian civilian population, causing hundreds of people to flee their homes, particularly in the Rafah area of the Gaza Strip, in search of safety. Clearly, the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip, already devastating, is being further exacerbated by the continuous bloodshed, destruction, crimes and terror being committed by the occupying Power against the Palestinian civilian population, which is now being intensified under the pretext of pressuring the Palestinians that have captured the Israeli soldier to release him. In that regard, it should be highlighted that, even prior to the capture of the soldier of the occupying forces, Israeli officials had been issuing a series of threats regarding the intention to launch a major invasion of the Gaza Strip.

Further in that regard, it must be clearly stated that the Palestinian leadership, including President Mahmoud Abbas himself, has called for the captive Israeli soldier to be treated in accordance with the rules of international humanitarian law and has called for his safety. The Palestinian leadership has urged a diplomatic solution to the problem and has been exerting all efforts to that end, which are being undermined by this latest Israeli military aggression, underscoring the fact that Israel, the occupying Power, seeks only to address this issue and all other issues regarding the Occupied Palestinian Territory by exercising its military might and oppression against the Palestinian people held captive under its occupation as well as against their leadership.

The international community must exert urgent efforts to bring a halt to the Israeli military invasion of Gaza and a halt to the collective punishment and crimes being committed against the Palestinian people by the occupying Power with sheer impunity. In this regard, the Security Council, in upholding its main responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, should take the necessary measures and should condemn the aggression and demand that Israel, the occupying Power, cease its attacks, withdraw its occupying forces and abide by its obligations under international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, in all of its actions vis-à-vis the Palestinian civilian population under its occupation. Further in this regard, it must once more be reiterated that the defenceless Palestinian civilians under Israel's belligerent occupation are entitled under international law — just like all other civilians in situations of armed conflict — to protection, and measures should accordingly be taken to provide them with safety and security.

If action is not taken to address the current grave developments, the situation on the ground will only further destabilize, perpetuating the cycle of violence reignited by the occupying Power, worsening humanitarian conditions and civilian suffering in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and severely undermining ongoing Palestinian efforts to promote calm, stability and unity as well as the efforts of the international community, including the Quartet, to bring about a resumption of negotiations and to restart the peace process. We thus reiterate our appeal to the international community for urgent action to address the present crisis.

This letter is in follow-up to our previous 248 letters to you regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, since 28 September 2000. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 22 June 2006 (A/ES-10/340-S/2006/432), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the

Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, State terrorism and systematic human rights violations committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Feda Abdelhady-**Nasser**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.